



TEXAS GENERAL LAND OFFICE
GEORGE P. BUSH, COMMISSIONER

1700 N. Congress Ave. • Austin, TX 78701-1495 • 512- 463-5339 • FAX: 512-475-1415

PRESS RELEASE

Commissioner Bush, Governor Abbott headline Texas Charter Revolution Rally

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Contact: Brittany Eck
512-936-9582
brittany.eck@glo.texas.gov

AUSTIN —

AUSTIN – Texas Land Commissioner George P. Bush and Governor Greg Abbott joined forces today to show their support for public charter schools on the steps of the Texas Capitol. Commissioner Bush is making education a top priority at the Texas General Land Office.

“As Texas Land Commissioner, as a former teacher and most importantly, as a parent, I am proud to join all of you in this rally,” Commissioner Bush said. “I do so for one very simple, but profound reason: I believe that when we give families a choice ... we give students a chance. Nothing we do today matters more for tomorrow than education. We are training the future leaders of Texas right now... and we need to do it right.”

Commissioner Bush emphasized that some schools do not function at a high level and are unable to improve. He and the bipartisan group of legislative leaders echoed each other’s remarks that school choice is the way to provide children and their parents with the educational tools to find the best academic path for each child.

“Education policy is too important for politics,” Bush said. “If families are trapped with a school that isn’t serving their children, then we must give them options. It’s the least we can do.”

Additional speakers included Lt. Governor Dan Patrick, Sens. Larry Taylor and Don Huffines and Reps. Dwayne Bohac, Harold Dutton, Rick Galindo, James Frank and Jim Murphy. The day before the rally, Commissioner Bush sent a letter expressing support to House Committee on Ways and Means Chairman Dennis Bonnen in favor of House Bill 1276 and House Joint Resolution 85 authored by Rep. Murphy. The supporting legislation would enable all schools, including charter schools, that lease land to receive the same ad valorem tax exemption as schools that own their property. This reduction in tax will leave the public charter schools additional money to put back in the classroom and invest in their teachers and staff. One public charter school operator would save as much as \$400,000 annually, which Commissioner Bush indicated would be enough money to hire new teachers, upgrade technology and begin work on a new campus.

“If families do not feel their current school is serving their children, then they should have options,” Commissioner Bush said. “There are 105,000 families waiting to get into charter schools in Texas and HB 1276 and HJR 85 promotes further public charter school success and growth.”

Additionally, in early April Commissioner Bush unveiled the redesigned and streamlined Texas General Land Office education website – www.txglo.org/education. This website is the first of its kind in the GLO’s storied history, bringing all of the agency’s educational resources together in one place for teachers and students. This site will also be the home of future GLO educational lesson plans, activities and other offerings. The purpose of the GLO education website redesign — the second of the agency’s websites to be redesigned — is to streamline access to information and lesson plans provided by the GLO for use by Texas educators and parents.

The GLO has long played a key role in education across Texas. The Texas Constitution of 1876 set aside half of Texas’ remaining public lands to establish a Permanent School Fund (PSF) to help finance public schools. Legislators intended for this land to be sold and the proceeds deposited into the PSF. Deposits to the PSF would be an inexhaustible source of revenue because only interest income from the fund could be spent and would be apportioned among the state’s public schools.

The Land Office manages these lands, including sales, trades, leases and improvements, as well as administration of contracts, mineral royalty rates, and other transactions. These lands generate revenues primarily through oil and gas revenues, but also through land sales and leases for surface uses. The interest earned on the PSF investments is distributed by the State Board of Education to every school district in Texas on a per-pupil basis. In short, the GLO turns Texas’ vast natural mineral resources into textbooks for Texas’ future leaders. Since it began earning money for the PSF in the 1870’s, the GLO has deposited more than \$16 billion in the fund.

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